



# GRAB BAR EXERCISE GUIDE

*Using Your Grab Bars to Improve Strength and Balance*





## USING YOUR EXISTING GRAB BARS TO BUILD STRENGTH AND STAY SAFE

These exercises turn your grab bars from safety devices into strength training tools. By using them regularly throughout your home, you'll build the strength and balance that keeps you safe and independent.

### WHAT TO EXPECT:

- **WEEKS 1-2:** You'll learn the movements and they may feel challenging
- **WEEKS 3-4:** Movements will feel easier and you'll start using less grip support
- **WEEKS 5-8:** You'll notice improved strength in daily activities and better overall balance
- **WEEK 8+:** Continue practicing to maintain your strength and independence

### THE PROGRESSION MANY PEOPLE FOLLOW:

1. Start with grab bar exercises using bars you already have installed
2. Practice 2-3 times per week in different areas of your home
3. Notice improvements in strength, balance, and confidence
4. Consider installing additional grab bars in hallways or outdoor areas where you have more space for exercise training

**REMEMBER:** The grab bar isn't a sign of weakness—it's your training equipment for staying strong. Start where you are, use what you have, and build the strength you need to stay safe and independent in every area of your home.

**COMMISSIONED BY:** Ponte Giulio USA | **PREPARED BY:** Dr. Adesola "Dessy" Laolu-Akinola, PT, DPT, GCS

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# HOW TO USE THESE EXERCISES

**FREQUENCY:** Practice these exercises 2-3 times per week

**DURATION:** Start with 10-15 minutes per session

## GETTING STARTED:

- Begin with 4-5 exercises that feel comfortable and safe
- Use grab bars in different areas of your home for variety
- Use firm grip on the grab bar when starting
- As you get stronger, gradually use lighter grip
- Stop if you feel dizzy, pain, or excessive fatigue

## WHERE TO PRACTICE:

**BATHROOM:** Exercises 1-4, 6-8, 10

**DOORWAYS:** Exercises 2-3, 5, 9

**HALLWAYS:** Exercises 2-3, 6-7, 10

**EXTERIOR DOORS/PORCHES:** Exercises 2-3, 9

## PROGRESSION:

WEEK	FOCUS
1-2	Learn the movements with firm grip on the bar
3-4	Use lighter grip, increase repetitions
5-6	Progress to fingertip support on easier exercises
7+	Continue building strength and reducing reliance on the bar

## SAMPLE ROUTINE:

EXERCISE #	EXERCISE NAME	HOW MANY?
1	Sit-to-Stand	Repeat 8-10 times
2	Standing Heel Raises	Repeat 12-15 times
3	Single-Leg Balance	30 seconds each leg, repeat 3 times on each leg
4	Wall Squats with Grab Bar Support	Repeat 10-12 times
5	Doorway Step-Through Practice	Repeat 8-10 times, then switch leading leg
6	Hip Lifts	Repeat 10-12 times, then switch sides
7	Marching in Place	30-60 seconds
8	Standing Forward Lean (Hip Hinge)	Repeat 8-10 times
9	Door Pull Strengthening	Repeat 8-10 times
10	Tandem Stance (Heel-to-Toe Standing)	Repeat 3 times on each side

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## SAFETY NOTES



### BEFORE YOU START:

- Make sure your grab bars are properly installed and secure
- Test the bar before each exercise session by applying your full body weight
- Clear the area of obstacles (rugs, cords, loose items)
- Wear non-slip footwear or go barefoot on non-slip surfaces



### DURING EXERCISE:

- Don't rush—quality of movement matters more than speed
- Breathe normally; don't hold your breath
- If you feel dizzy, stop and sit down immediately
- If you feel sharp pain, stop that exercise
- Use a firmer grip on the bar anytime you feel unsteady



### WHEN TO PROGRESS:

- Only move to harder variations when you can complete the current level with good control
- It's better to do exercises well with more support than to rush to less support with poor form



### RECOMMENDED GRAB BARS:

A securely mounted grab bar is needed to practice these exercises. Ponte Giulio recommends the **PRO series vinyl-coated grab bar** because of its superior quality. The Vinyl Coating on the PRO Series is what makes these the best grab bars available.

#### The vinyl coating provides:

- Permanent anti-microbial protection against bacteria, fungi, and microbes
- Feels warmer and softer to the touch
- Provides a superior non-slip grip
- Available in 11 color options to coordinate or contrast
- Available in 9 lengths, starting with 12" to 48"

## EXERCISE 1: SIT-TO-STAND FROM TOILET

**EQUIPMENT:** Grab bar positioned beside or across from toilet (vertical or horizontal)

**WHAT IT STRENGTHENS:**

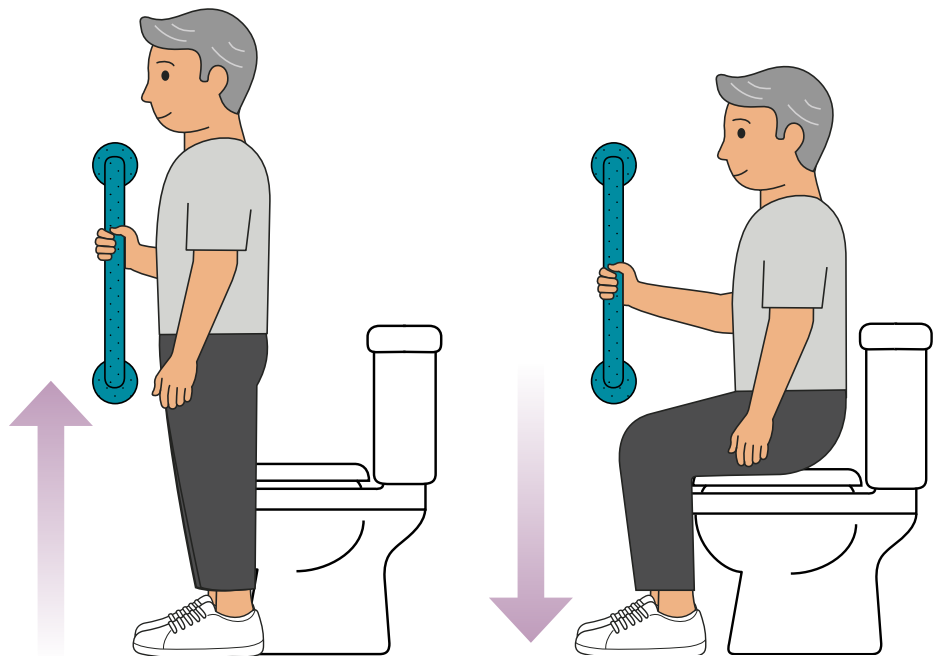
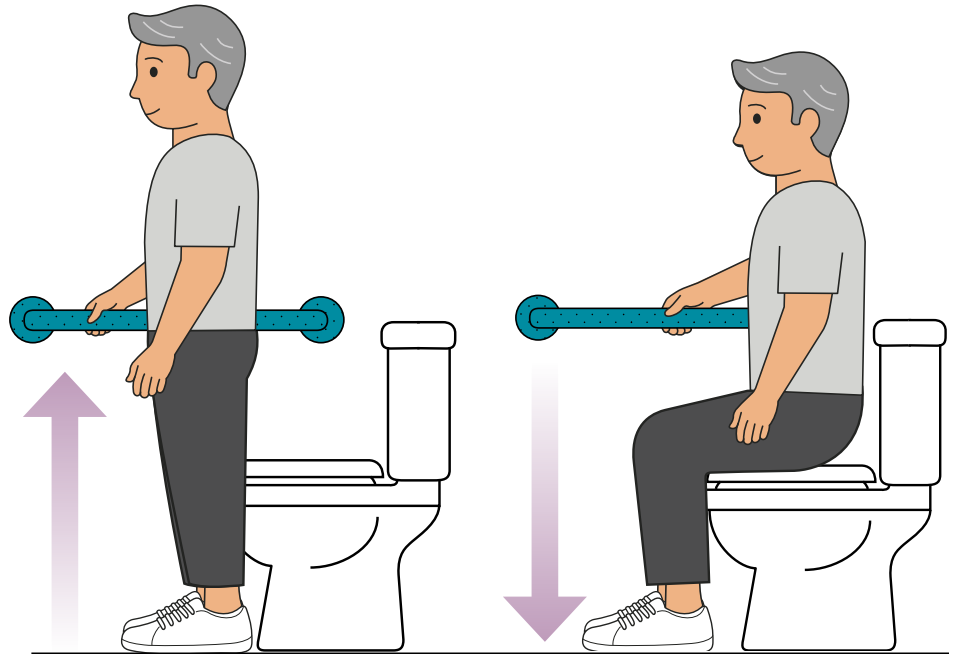
Leg muscles (quadriceps, glutes), core stability

**WHY IT HELPS:** Getting up from the toilet is one of the most common movements where falls occur. This exercise builds the exact strength you need for safe toilet transfers and getting in/out of chairs.

**HOW TO DO IT:**

1. Sit on the toilet with feet flat on the floor, hip-width apart
2. Hold the grab bar with one or both hands
3. Lean forward slightly and push through your heels to stand up
4. Lower yourself back down slowly, taking 3-4 seconds to sit
5. Repeat 8-10 times

**KEY POINT:** *The slow lowering (sitting down) is the most important part. This builds the "braking" strength that prevents falls.*



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## EXERCISE 2: STANDING HEEL RAISES

**EQUIPMENT:** Any grab bar in your home (vertical or horizontal)

**WHAT IT STRENGTHENS:**

Calf muscles (ankle strength)

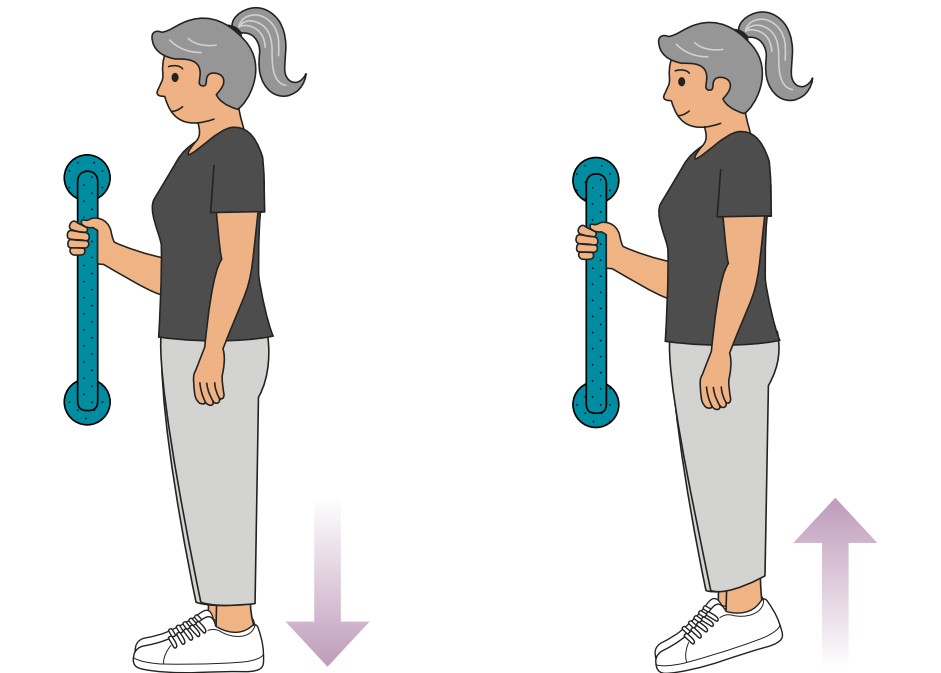
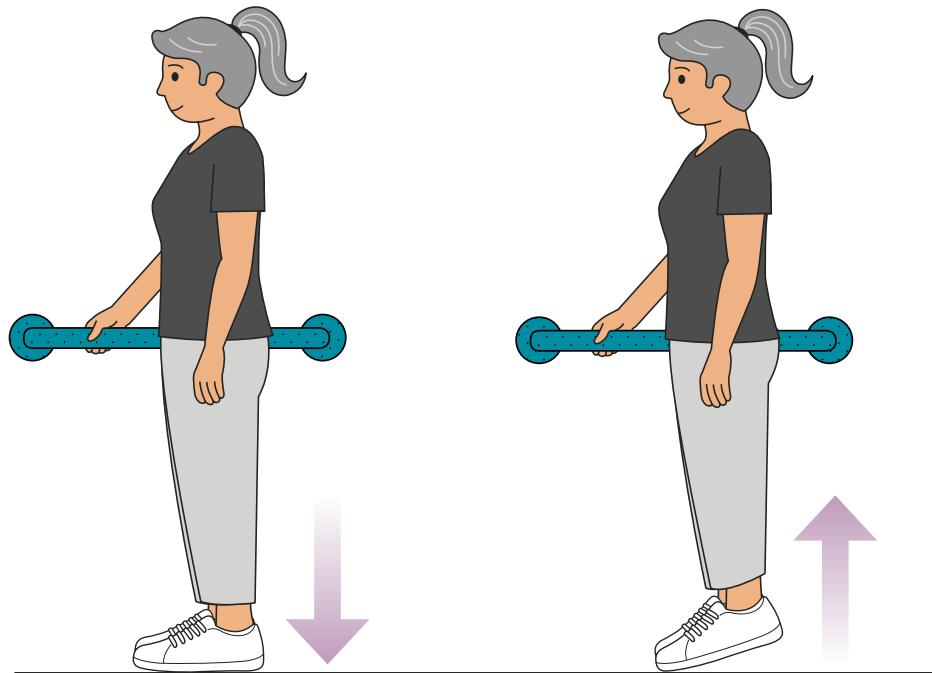
**WHY IT HELPS:** Strong ankles

help you recover your balance when you trip or stumble. This exercise improves your ability to catch yourself and prevents forward falls.

**HOW TO DO IT:**

1. Stand near the grab bar, holding it with one or both hands
2. Rise up onto the balls of your feet as high as comfortable
3. Hold for 2 seconds at the top
4. Lower your heels slowly back to the floor
5. Repeat 12-15 times

**KEY POINT:** *Focus on the slow, controlled lowering. This builds the ankle strength you need for steady walking.*



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## EXERCISE 3: SINGLE-LEG BALANCE

**EQUIPMENT:** Any grab bar in your home (vertical or horizontal)

**WHAT IT STRENGTHENS:**

Balance, ankle stability, hip strength

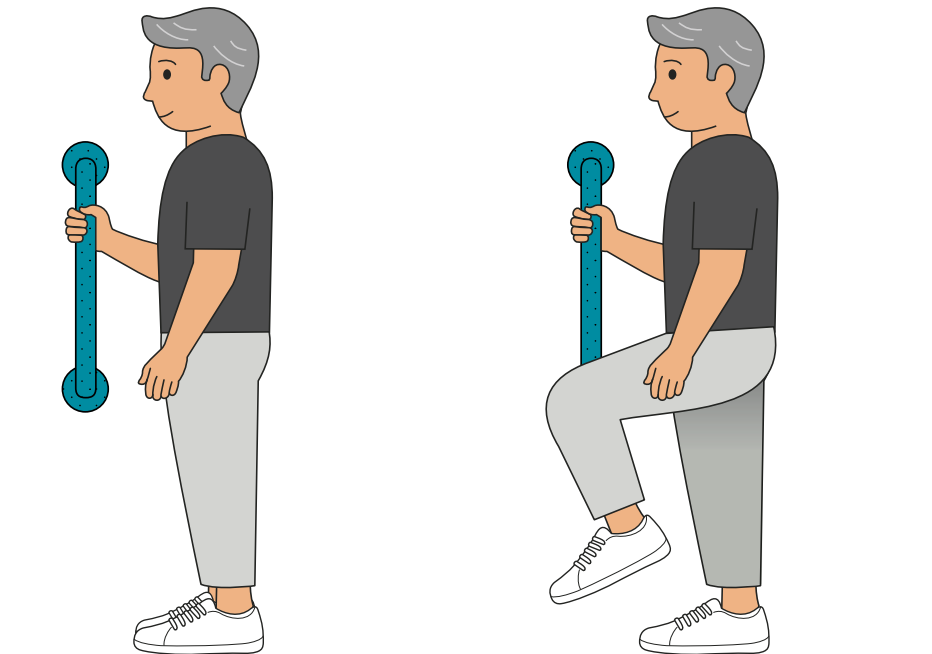
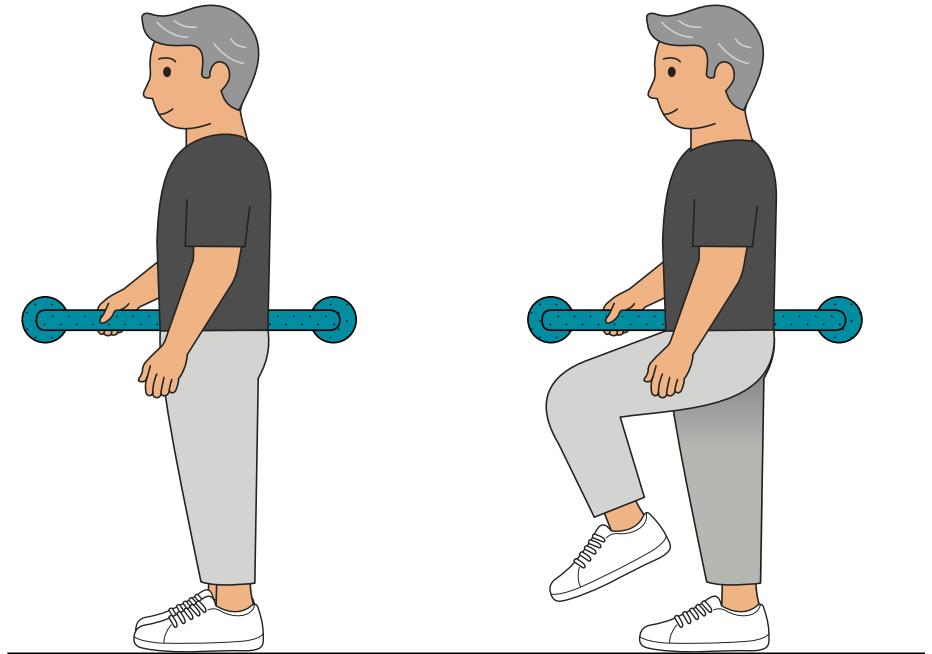
**WHY IT HELPS:** Being able to stand on one leg is critical for putting on pants, stepping over objects, and walking safely. People who can't balance on one leg for at least 5 seconds have three times higher fall risk.

**HOW TO DO IT:**

1. Stand beside or facing the grab bar with one hand resting on it
2. Lift one foot a few inches off the ground
3. Hold the position for up to 30 seconds
4. Switch to the other leg
5. Repeat 3 times on each leg

**PROGRESSION:** Start by holding the bar firmly. As you improve, use lighter touch, then just fingertips, then try hovering your hand without touching.

**KEY POINT:** *Keep your standing knee slightly bent, not locked straight.*



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**EQUIPMENT:** Grab bar mounted on wall (vertical or horizontal)

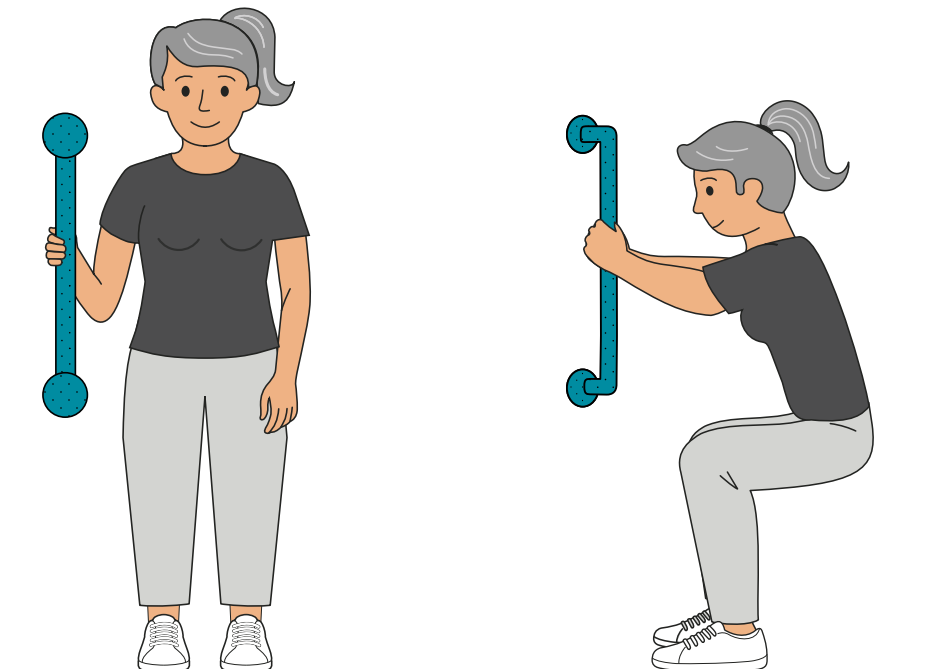
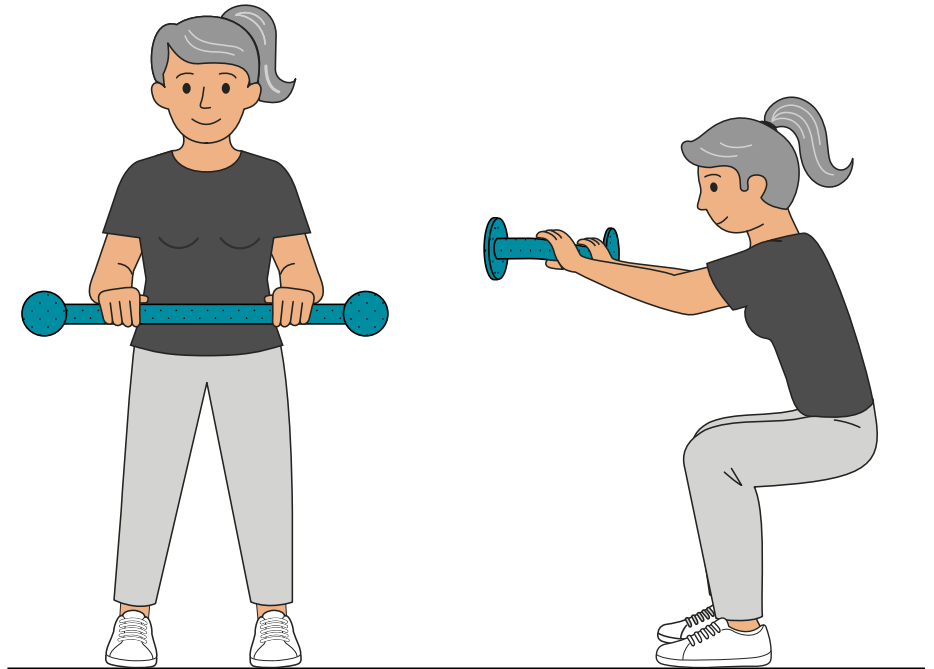
**WHAT IT STRENGTHENS:** Thigh muscles (quadriceps), glutes, core

**WHY IT HELPS:** Squatting movements build the strength you need for stairs, getting in/out of the bathtub, and bending safely. The controlled lowering trains your body's "brakes."

## HOW TO DO IT:

1. Stand facing the grab bar, holding it with both hands
2. Keep your feet hip-width apart, weight on your heels
3. Slowly bend your knees and lower yourself, counting "1-2-3-4"
4. Only squat as far as comfortable (quarter to half squat)
5. Stand back up, counting "1-2"
6. Repeat 10-12 times

**KEY POINT:** *The 4-second lowering phase is most important. This is when you build strength for safe descents.*



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## EXERCISE 5: DOORWAY STEP-THROUGH PRACTICE

**EQUIPMENT:** Grab bar mounted on door or doorframe (vertical bar works best)

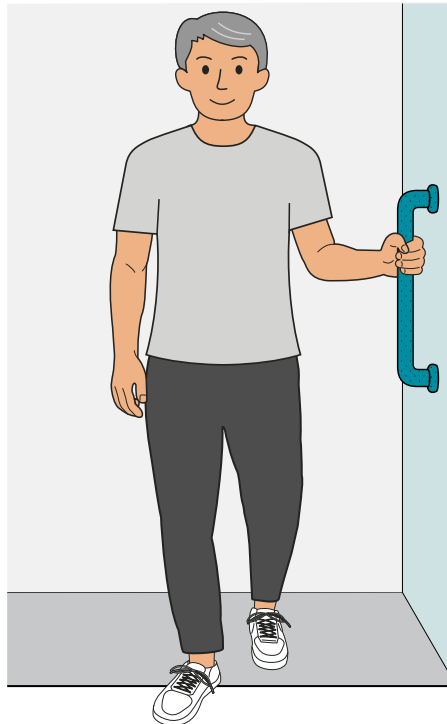
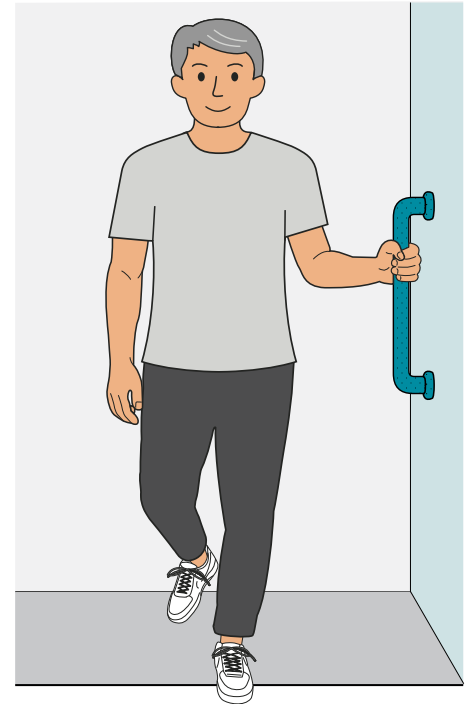
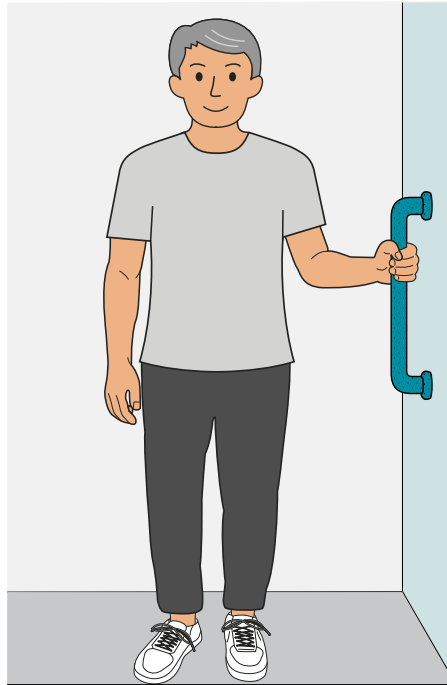
**WHAT IT STRENGTHENS:** Leg muscles, balance, coordination, spatial awareness

**WHY IT HELPS:** Navigating doorways and thresholds requires balance and coordination. This exercise makes door transitions safer and builds confidence moving through your home.

### HOW TO DO IT:

1. Stand in front of the doorway with the grab bar within reach
2. Hold the grab bar with one hand for support
3. Step through the doorway with one foot, then bring the other foot through
4. Step back through in reverse
5. Repeat 8-10 times, then switch leading leg

**KEY POINT:** *Practice the exact movement you do throughout the day. Control both the forward and backward movement.*



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## EXERCISE 6: STANDING HIP LIFTS (LEG LIFTS TO THE SIDE)

**EQUIPMENT:** Any grab bar at waist height

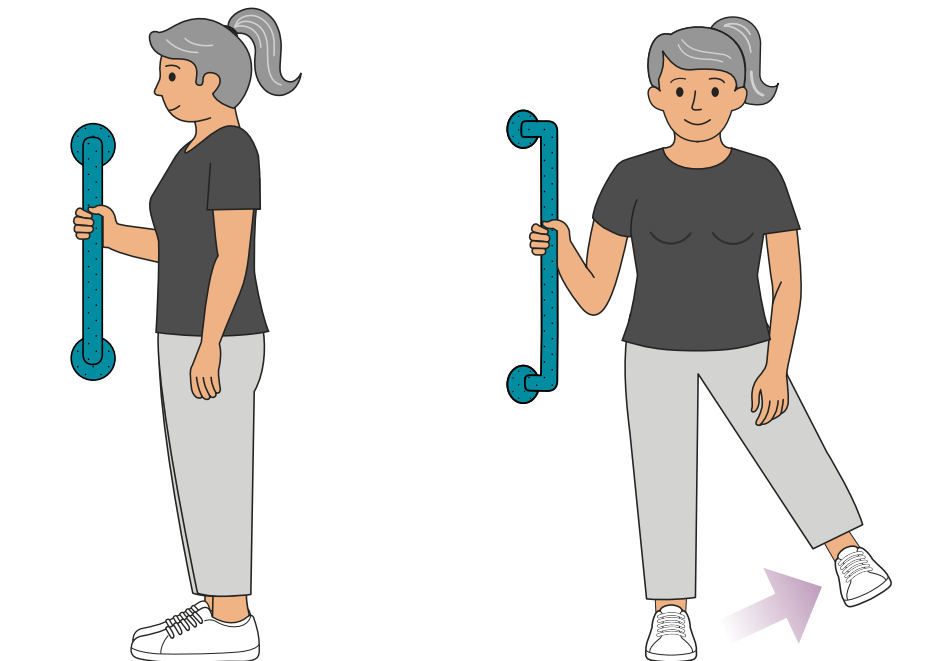
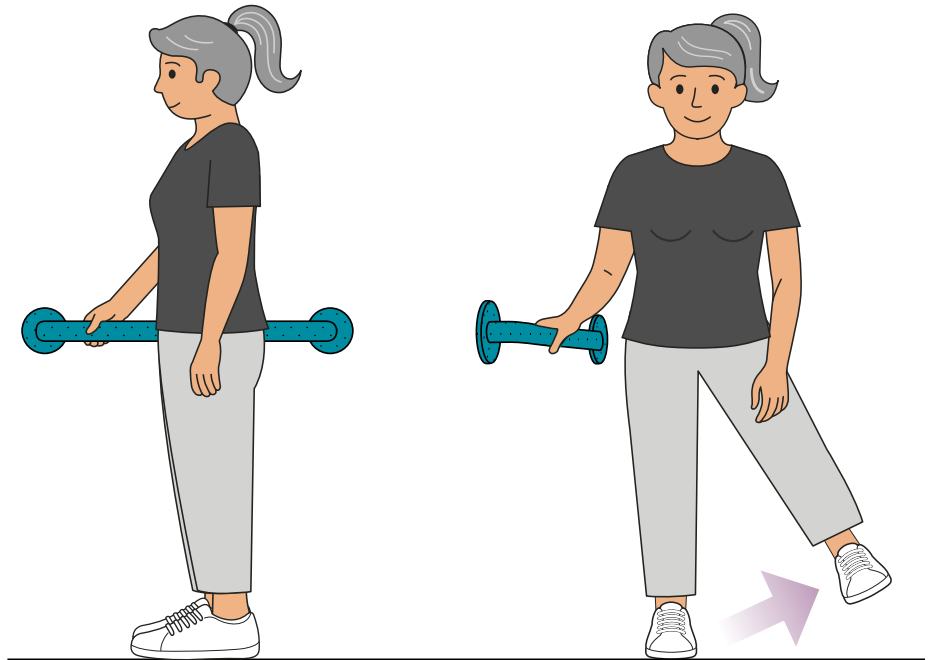
**WHAT IT STRENGTHENS:** Hip muscles (abductors on outer thigh)

**WHY IT HELPS:** Hip strength prevents sideways falls, which are the falls that cause hip fractures. This exercise targets the muscles on the sides of your hips.

### HOW TO DO IT:

1. Stand beside the grab bar, holding it with one hand
2. Keep your body straight and lift your outside leg to the side
3. Lift only 6-12 inches off the ground
4. Hold for 2 seconds, then lower slowly
5. Repeat 10-12 times, then switch sides

**KEY POINT:** *Keep your body upright—don't lean toward the bar. The movement should be small and controlled.*



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## EXERCISE 7: MARCHING IN PLACE EXERCISE

**EQUIPMENT:** Any grab bar in your home

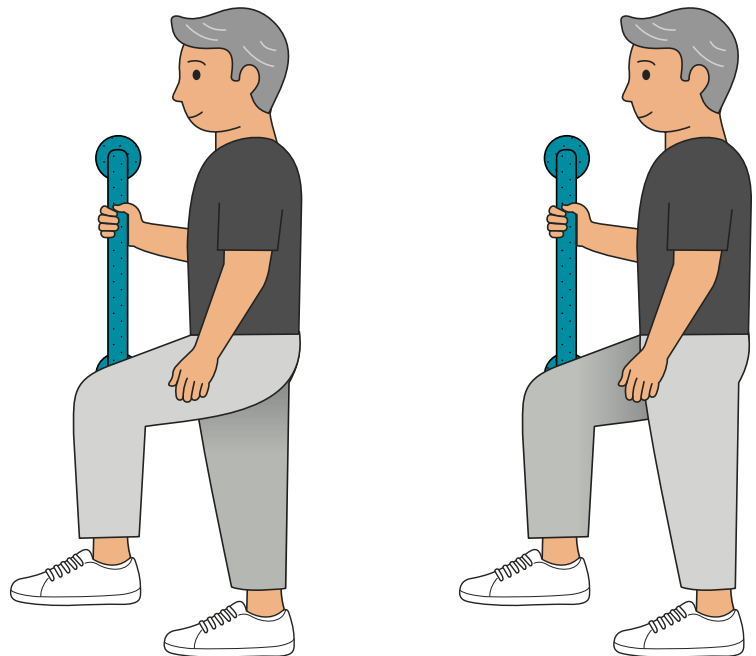
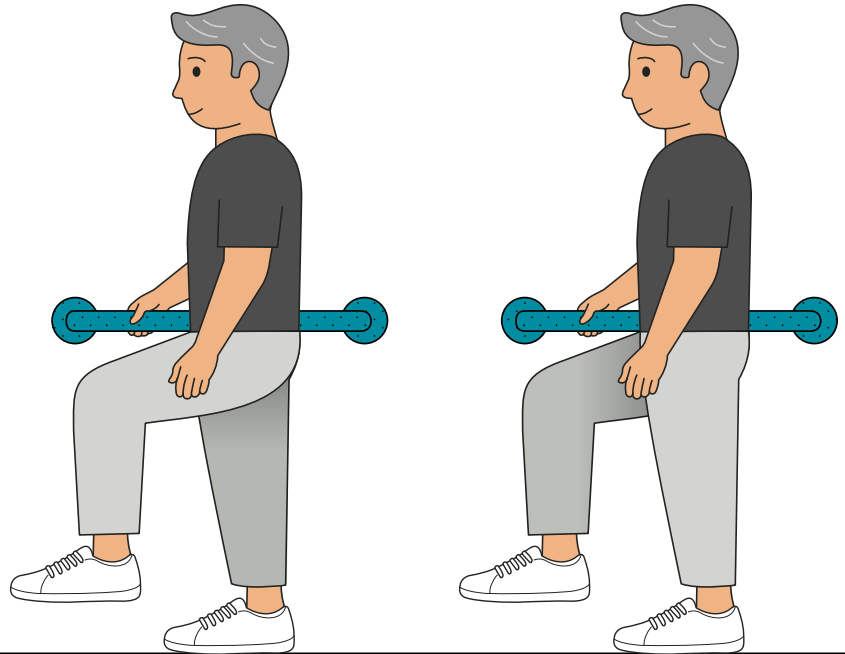
**WHAT IT STRENGTHENS:** Hip flexors, balance, coordination

**WHY IT HELPS:** Marching improves your ability to lift your feet high enough to clear obstacles and prevents tripping over thresholds, rugs, or uneven surfaces.

### HOW TO DO IT:

1. Stand beside or facing the grab bar, holding it lightly
2. Lift one knee up as high as comfortable
3. Lower it back down with control
4. Alternate legs, marching in place
5. Continue for 30-60 seconds

**KEY POINT:** *Lift your knees as high as you can while maintaining balance. This trains your body to clear obstacles.*



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**EQUIPMENT:** Grab bar mounted on wall (vertical or horizontal)

**WHAT IT STRENGTHENS:**

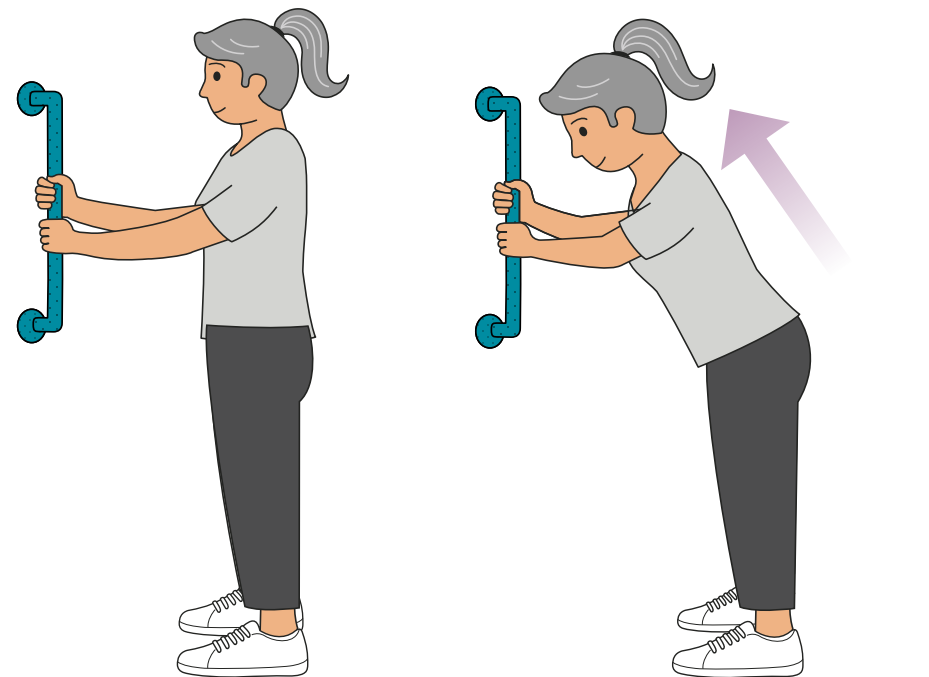
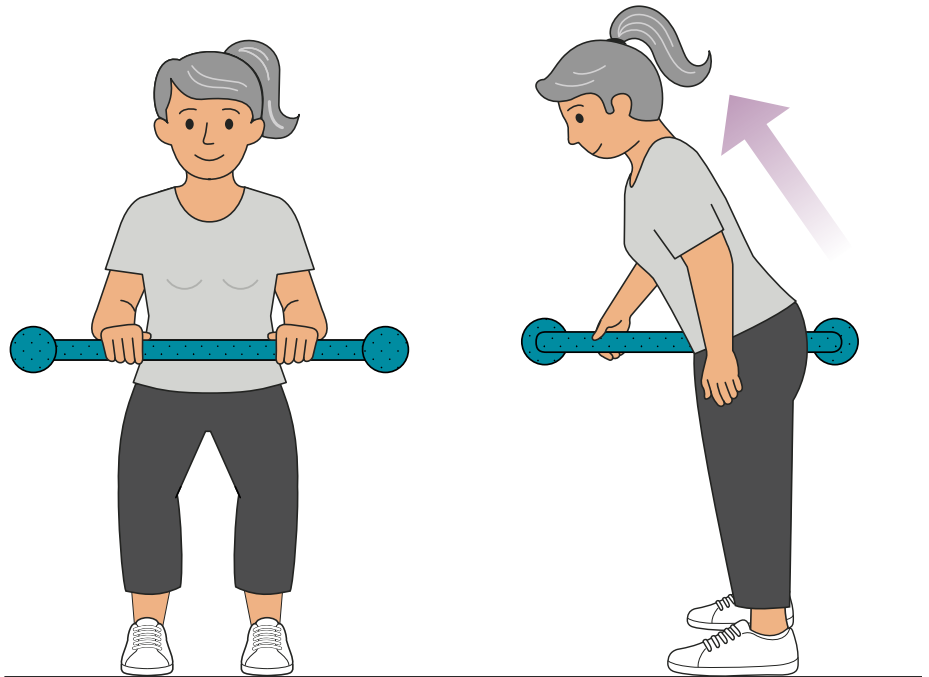
Core muscles, hamstrings, lower back, balance

**WHY IT HELPS:** This movement trains the safe bending pattern you need for picking items up from the floor, reaching down, or bending at counters and sinks.

**HOW TO DO IT:**

1. Stand facing the grab bar, holding it with both hands
2. Keep feet hip-width apart, knees slightly bent
3. Hinge forward at the hips (push your hips back), keeping your back straight
4. Lower your torso as far as comfortable while holding the bar
5. Pull yourself back to standing using your legs and core
6. Repeat 8-10 times

**KEY POINT:** *The movement comes from your hips, not your lower back. Keep your spine straight.*



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**EQUIPMENT:** Vertical grab bar mounted on door (like garage door, exterior door, or interior door)

**WHAT IT STRENGTHENS:**

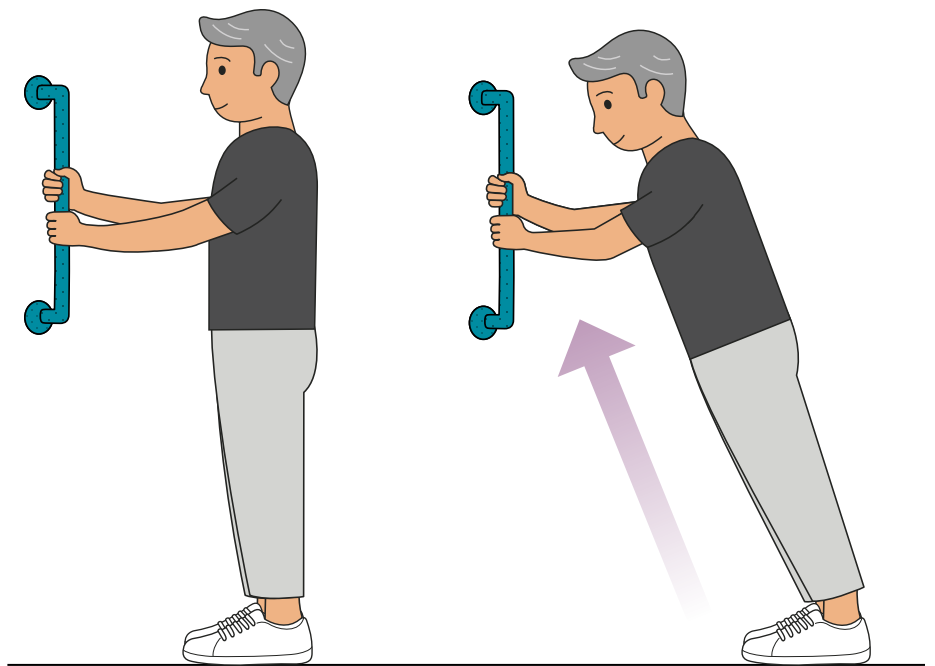
Arm muscles, grip strength, upper back, core

**WHY IT HELPS:** Arm and grip strength are essential for opening doors, carrying items, and catching yourself if you start to fall. Strong arms and grip predict overall health and independence.

**HOW TO DO IT:**

1. Stand facing the vertical grab bar on the door at arm's length
2. Hold the bar with both hands, one above the other
3. Gently pull yourself toward the bar, bending your elbows
4. Keep your body straight and core engaged
5. Hold for 2 seconds
6. Slowly straighten your arms back to starting position
7. Repeat 8-10 times

**KEY POINT:** *Don't let your hips push forward. Keep your body in a straight line from head to heels.*



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## EXERCISE 10: TANDEM STANCE (HEEL-TO-TOE STANDING)

**EQUIPMENT:** Any grab bar in your home

**WHAT IT STRENGTHENS:**

Advanced balance, core stability

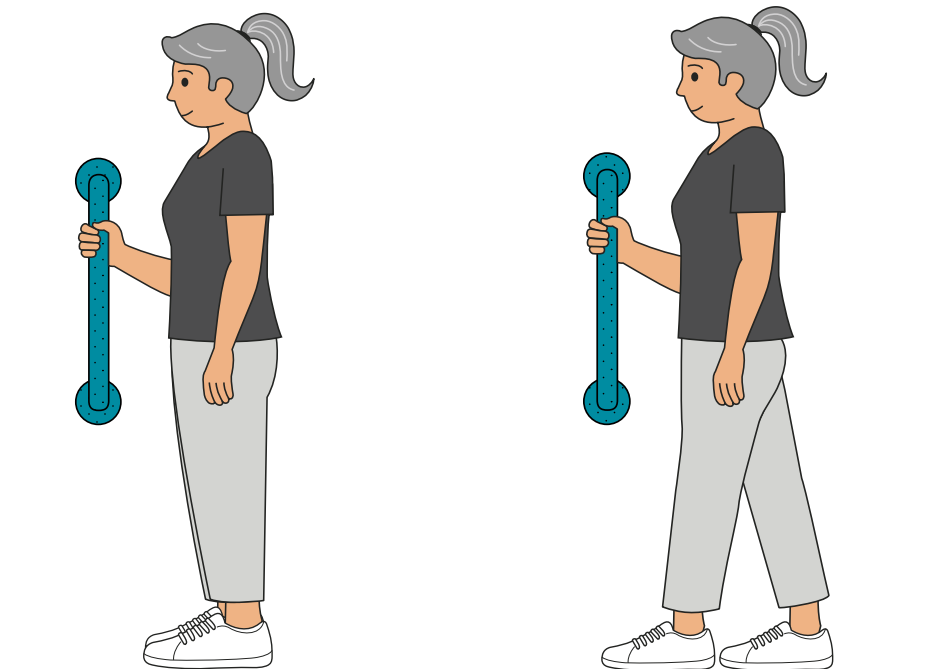
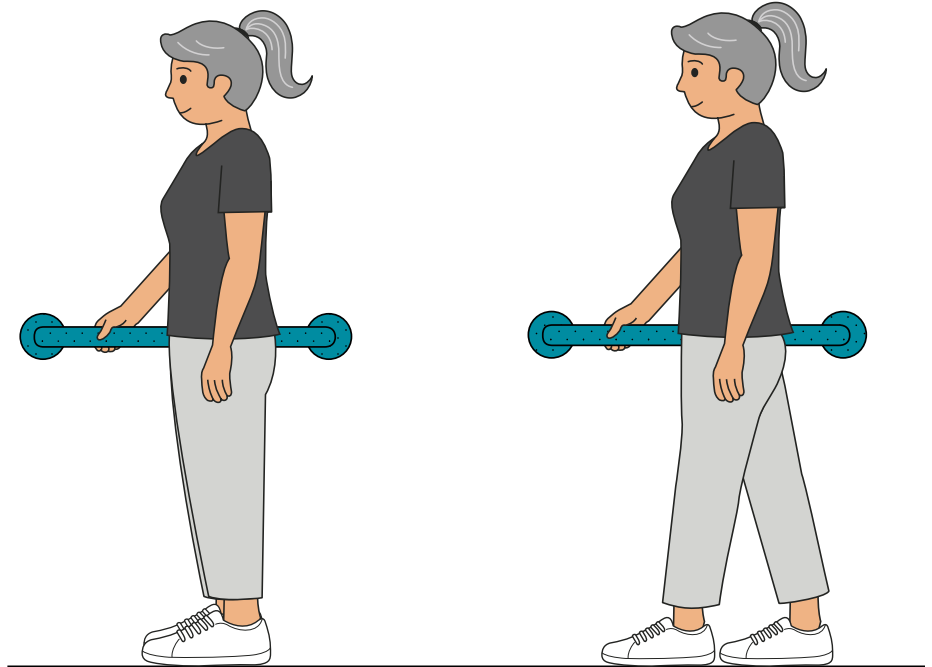
**WHY IT HELPS:** This narrow base of support challenges your balance system in a safe way, improving your stability for walking in tight spaces and navigating narrow hallways.

**HOW TO DO IT:**

1. Stand beside the grab bar with one hand on it
2. Place one foot directly in front of the other (heel touching toe)
3. Hold this position for 30 seconds
4. Switch which foot is in front
5. Repeat 3 times on each side

**PROGRESSION:** Start with light grip on the bar. As you improve, use less support.

**KEY POINT:** *Focus on a point straight ahead to help maintain balance.*



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